

BEAT THE BOTS · LAND THE JOB

# The AI Job-Search Playbook

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*Audit, rewrite, apply, interview, and negotiate your way to the offer, using the exact AI prompts that beat the bots and the 7-second skim.*

COMPILED BY

Nathaniel

# The AI Job-Search Playbook

**Beat the Bots, Land the Job: the complete AI job-search system.**

First edition, 2026. Compiled by Nathaniel. Shared freely with friends.

This book teaches a repeatable system for using Claude (Anthropic's AI assistant) to improve a resume, write cover letters, prepare for interviews, optimize a LinkedIn profile, and negotiate an offer. The prompt techniques collected here are adapted and expanded from publicly shared AI job-search workflows; the explanations, examples, structure, and commentary are the compiler's own.

**Not legal, financial, or career advice.** AI can make mistakes, so review and fact-check everything Claude produces and put it in your own voice before you send it to a real employer. Never submit numbers, claims, or accomplishments you cannot back up. "Claude," "Anthropic," "LinkedIn," and other product names belong to their respective owners and are used here for description only. This book is not affiliated with or endorsed by any of them.

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# Introduction

## THE GAME IS RIGGED, AND HERE'S HOW TO WIN IT ANYWAY

There is a quiet, brutal truth about the modern job hunt: most resumes are rejected before a single human being ever lays eyes on them.

You spend hours perfecting a document. You tweak the font, agonize over the wording, line up your accomplishments. Then you upload it into a web form, click *Submit*, and it vanishes into a system that scores it in milliseconds against a list of keywords you were never shown. If it doesn't clear the bar, it's filed away and you get a polite rejection three weeks later. More often, nothing at all.

That system is called an **Applicant Tracking System**, or ATS, and the overwhelming majority of mid-size and large employers use one. Its job is to *reduce* the pile, not to find the best person. And even after your resume survives the software, the human on the other side spends an average of **about seven seconds** skimming it before deciding whether to keep reading or move on.

Seven seconds. Two gatekeepers. One is a machine looking for the right words; the other is a tired person looking for a reason to say no. For years the advice for getting past them was vague: tailor your resume, use keywords, quantify your impact. All true, and all useless without a method.

That's what changed. You now have an assistant that can read a job description and your resume side by side, tell you exactly which keywords you're missing, rewrite your experience into the format top companies screen for, and then *play both gatekeepers back at you* so you fix the weak spots before you ever hit submit. The whole loop takes about ten minutes per role.

This book is the complete system. It's built around a small set of carefully designed prompts, plus everything around them: cover letters, LinkedIn, interview prep, follow-ups, and salary negotiation. I've added the reason each one works, worked examples, and the traps to avoid, so you're not just copying and pasting. You actually understand what you're doing.

## Who this is for

Anyone applying for jobs and tired of being ghosted. New graduates and career-changers who feel invisible. Experienced people whose resumes read like job descriptions instead of highlight reels. You don't need to be technical or a "prompt engineer." If you can copy a block of text and paste it into a chat box, you can run every system here.

## What you'll need

1. **A Claude account.** The free tier is enough for all the resume, cover-letter, interview, and negotiation prompts.
2. **Your current resume** in PDF, Word, or pasted plain text.
3. **The specific job description** you're targeting. This system is about *tailoring*, so a real posting matters far more than a generic goal.
4. **(Optional, for hands-free applying)** Claude Pro plus Cowork and the Claude in Chrome extension. Chapter 6 covers this, with all the cautions.

### THE ONE RULE THAT MAKES ALL OF THIS WORK

Claude gives you the structure. **You provide the substance.** Every output here is a first draft to be reviewed, corrected, and rewritten in your own voice with your own real numbers. The people who get burned by AI are the ones who paste its output unread. The people who get hired treat it as a fast, tireless coach, and then make the work their own.

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PART ONE

# Foundations

*Before you rewrite a single bullet, get to know the two gatekeepers, and how to make an AI work for you instead of spitting out generic mush.*

# Why Your Resume Gets Rejected by a Robot

## CHAPTER ONE · FOUNDATIONS

You cannot beat a system you don't understand. So let's open the black box.

### Gatekeeper #1: The ATS

When you apply through a careers page or most job boards, your resume lands first in an Applicant Tracking System, a filter sitting in front of the recruiter's inbox. It parses your document into fields (name, work history, skills, education) and compares it against the job's requirements, often ranking candidates by how well the text matches.

Two things get people filtered out before a human is involved:

- **Missing keywords.** If the posting asks for "stakeholder management," "SQL," or "demand generation" and those exact concepts aren't on your resume, the system can't credit you for them, even if you've done the work for years.
- **Formatting it can't read.** Columns, text boxes, tables, headers/footers, icons, and images often confuse the parser. Your beautiful two-column design can come out as scrambled nonsense, which reads as "unqualified."

#### THE REFRAME

The ATS isn't your enemy. It's a search engine. Your resume is a page trying to rank for a query (the job description). The fix isn't to "trick" it. It's to honestly speak the same language as the role, in a format it can read cleanly. That's exactly what the prompts in Part II do.

### Gatekeeper #2: The seven-second human

Survive the software and you reach a person who may be looking at 200 resumes for one opening. They aren't reading; they're *scanning* for fast reasons to sort you into "yes," "maybe," or "no." This is why a resume full of duties ("Responsible for managing the social media calendar") loses to one full of outcomes ("Grew Instagram engagement 4x in six months, driving 1,200 inbound leads"). The first describes a job. The second describes *impact*, and impact makes a skimming human stop.

## **What this means for your strategy**

Every job needs a *tailored* resume. The same generic document blasted to 50 listings underperforms a sharply targeted one sent to 10. That used to be impractical, because nobody rewrites a resume forty times by hand. AI removes the constraint. You can now produce a customized, keyword-aligned, outcome-driven resume for each role in minutes. The rest of this book turns that into a repeatable machine.

# How to Talk to Claude Like a Career Coach

## CHAPTER TWO · FOUNDATIONS

The difference between a useless AI answer and a brilliant one is almost always the quality of the instruction, and the context you give it.

### Three habits that 10x your results

#### 1. Give it the raw materials, not a summary

Paste or upload your *actual* resume and the *actual, full* job description. Don't paraphrase. The system works by comparing real text to real text. The more concrete context Claude has, the more specific and useful it is.

#### 2. Assign it a role

"Act as a senior recruiter for this company." "Act as an ATS filter." "Act as a hiring manager reading 200 resumes." Putting Claude in a specific seat changes the lens it evaluates you through. Role assignment is the backbone of nearly every prompt in this book.

#### 3. Work in one continuous chat

The resume prompts run *in sequence inside one conversation*. The audit (Ch 3) gives context the rewrite (Ch 4) builds on, which the stress test (Ch 5) checks. Start a fresh chat for each new *job*, but keep all steps for one job together so context carries forward.

#### PRO MOVE: ASK FOR AN ARTIFACT

When you want a clean final document, ask Claude to "output the final resume as a single clean artifact I can download." Export it (for example, as a .docx) and use it directly, once you've filled in the placeholders and reviewed every line.

### The honesty dial

By default an assistant tends to be encouraging. For a job hunt that's a liability. Throughout this book you'll see lines like "*Be brutally honest. I'd rather fix problems now than get ghosted later.*" That's not decoration. It gives Claude permission to tell you what's actually weak. Keep it in. Better to hear the hard feedback in private from an AI than in silence from an employer.

## The placeholder discipline

Good prompts ask Claude to insert [FILL IN] markers wherever it needs a real number it doesn't have. This is a feature: the AI will never silently invent a statistic. **You** fill those in with true figures. If you really don't have a number, estimate honestly and conservatively, and be ready to explain it.

### NEVER FABRICATE

AI sometimes makes things up ("hallucinates"). It's your job to catch it. Don't let a metric, title, date, or claim onto your resume unless it's true and you can defend it. Getting caught exaggerating in an interview, or after being hired, is far worse than a modest, honest resume.

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PART TWO

# The Resume System

*Three prompts, run back to back in one chat: audit what you have, rewrite it into outcomes, then stress-test it against both gatekeepers before you submit.*

# The Resume Audit

## CHAPTER THREE · THE RESUME SYSTEM · PROMPT 1 OF 3

Never start by rewriting. Start by finding out, honestly, where you actually stand.

The instinct when a resume isn't working is to start changing words. Resist it, because you'll just rearrange the same weaknesses. The first move is a diagnosis: upload your resume *and* the target job description, and ask Claude to evaluate you as a senior recruiter at that exact company. You want the unvarnished truth: the match score, the missing keywords, and the red flags a real screener catches in seconds.

### PROMPT 1 · THE RESUME AUDIT

Act as a senior recruiter for this exact company.  
Analyze my resume against this job description.

Give me:

1. A match score out of 100
2. The top 5 missing keywords that the ATS will be scanning for
3. The 3 red flags a hiring manager would spot in under 10 seconds
4. Which sections are strong and why
5. Which sections are weak and why
6. How my resume compares to what a strong candidate for this role would look like

Be brutally honest. I would rather fix problems now than get ghosted later.

## Why it works

- **"Senior recruiter for this exact company"** forces specificity. A recruiter knows what a strong candidate looks like and what the company values, not generic platitudes.
- **The match score** gives you a baseline to beat. After the rewrite you'll re-run it and watch it climb.
- **The missing keywords** are the raw material for Chapter 4: the exact words the ATS hunts for that aren't on your page.
- **The red flags** surface what quietly sinks you: an unexplained gap, job-hopping, a vague summary, a missing must-have skill.
- **"Brutally honest"** unlocks the criticism you actually need.

### DO NOT SKIP THIS STEP

It's tempting to jump straight to "rewrite my resume." Don't. The audit tells you precisely *what* to change and *why*. Without it, the rewrite is guessing. Most people are surprised by what the audit reveals.

## How to read the output

Don't be discouraged by a low score. A 52/100 first pass is normal and fixable. Copy the missing keywords somewhere visible. Note every red flag. If anything is unclear, ask follow-ups right in the chat: "Why is my summary weak?" or "Show me how a strong candidate would phrase point 3."

# The Experience Rewrite

## CHAPTER FOUR · THE RESUME SYSTEM · PROMPT 2 OF 3

This is where a resume of *duties* becomes a resume of *results*, using the formula top companies use to evaluate candidates.

Stay in the same chat so Claude still has the audit in context. Now rewrite your experience using the **Google XYZ formula**:

| *Accomplished [X] as measured by [Y] by doing [Z].*

In plain terms: *what* you achieved, the *number* that proves it, and *how* you did it.

### PROMPT 2 · THE EXPERIENCE REWRITE

Rewrite my experience section using these rules:

1. Naturally include the missing keywords you identified, but do NOT force them in. They should feel like a normal part of each bullet.
2. Remove or fix every red flag you flagged.
3. Use the Google XYZ formula for every bullet: "Accomplished [X] as measured by [Y] by doing [Z]"
4. Start every bullet with a strong action verb. Never use "Responsible for" or "Helped with".
5. Add specific numbers wherever possible. If I did not provide numbers, suggest realistic placeholders I can fill in later and mark them with [FILL IN].
6. Keep each bullet to 1–2 lines max. Hiring managers skim. Dense paragraphs get skipped.
7. Order bullets by impact, not chronology. The most impressive result goes first.

## The transformation, in one example

### BEFORE · A TASK

*"Managed a team of 5 engineers."*

### AFTER · AN ACCOMPLISHMENT (XYZ)

"Reduced deployment time 40% (measured by weekly release velocity) by restructuring 5 engineers into cross-functional pods."

The first tells the reader what you were *responsible for*. The second tells them what *happened because you were there*. A hiring manager cares about the second, because it's evidence you'll create value for them too.

## Why each rule matters

- **Keywords woven in naturally** beats stuffing, which reads as desperate and can be penalized.
- **Strong action verbs** ("Reduced," "Launched," "Drove," "Built," "Negotiated") project ownership; "Responsible for" projects the opposite.
- **Numbers** are the biggest credibility multiplier on a resume.
- **1–2 lines per bullet** respects the seven-second skim.
- **Order by impact** puts your best result where the eye lands first.

### ABOUT THOSE [FILL IN] MARKERS

Claude marks places where a number would help but it lacks your data. Fill every one with a *true* figure. If you don't track a metric, make an honest, defensible estimate. Never insert a number you couldn't explain in an interview.

### IF YOU'RE LIGHT ON METRICS

Ask Claude: "Interview me with 5 questions to help me uncover quantifiable results from this role." It will probe team sizes, time saved, money earned or saved, percentages improved, volumes handled, customers served. These are numbers you have but never thought to use.

# The ATS & Hiring-Manager Stress Test

## CHAPTER FIVE · THE RESUME SYSTEM · PROMPT 3 OF 3

Before a real gatekeeper judges your resume, make Claude play *both* of them and tell you where it still falls short.

Still in the same chat. You've audited and rewritten. Now pressure-test the result from the two perspectives that decide your fate: the software that screens you out, and the human looking for a reason to say no.

### PROMPT 3 · THE ATS & HIRING-MANAGER TEST

Now act as two different people:

FIRST: Act as an ATS filter. Scan my new resume and tell me:

- Would it pass the ATS for this job? (Yes/No)
- Which keywords are now present and which are still missing?
- Any formatting issues that would confuse an ATS parser? (tables, columns, headers, special characters, images)

SECOND: Act as a hiring manager who is reading 200 resumes in one sitting. Scan my resume and tell me:

- Which sections would you skip? Why?
- What makes you stop scrolling (good or bad)?
- Would you put this in the "yes" pile, "maybe" pile, or "no" pile for this role?
- Rewrite any sections that would get skipped so they actually stop the scroll.

Give me the final version of my resume after all fixes are applied.

## What you're looking for

From the **ATS pass**: a clean "Yes," every important keyword present, and zero formatting landmines. If it flags tables, columns, text boxes, or images, simplify to a clean single-column layout with standard headings.

From the **hiring-manager pass**: you want the "yes" pile. Pay closest attention to "which sections would you skip." That's dead weight a real screener glides past. Let Claude rewrite it to "stop the scroll."

### **CLOSE THE LOOP**

After the fixes, ask Claude to re-run the audit and give the new match score. Watching it jump from 54 to 88 confirms the resume is ready. Then request the final version as a clean single-column artifact, export it, fill in every [ FILL IN ], and read every line aloud once.

### **LAST CHECK BEFORE YOU SUBMIT**

Review the whole document for accuracy and voice. Every number real, every placeholder filled, formatting simple and parseable, and it sounds like a confident human rather than something AI wrote. This 90-second review is the difference between a resume that works and one that quietly gets screened out.

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PART THREE

# Applying at Scale

*A great resume is wasted in a folder. Now you get it in front of people, with tailored applications, sharp cover letters, and a LinkedIn profile that makes recruiters come to you.*

# Auto-Apply with Cowork

## CHAPTER SIX · APPLYING AT SCALE · PROMPT 4

The power move, and the one to handle with the most care. Once your resume is sharp, Claude can find and apply to matching jobs for you.

This is the most advanced technique in the book. Using **Claude Cowork** with the **Claude in Chrome** extension, Claude can browse LinkedIn, find roles you're qualified for, tailor your application to each, and submit. Done right, it turns a tedious afternoon of form-filling into a reviewed, customized batch.

### PROMPT 4 · AUTO-APPLY WITH COWORK

Now that my resume is optimized, go to LinkedIn and do the following:

1. Search for [JOB TITLE] roles in [LOCATION] posted in the last [7/14/30] days.
2. Filter for jobs where my resume is at least a 70% match based on the skills and experience listed in the job description.
3. Pick the top 10 jobs I have the highest chance of landing an interview for.
4. For each job:
  - Read the full job description
  - Customize my resume summary and key bullets to match that specific role
  - Write a short cover note (3 sentences max) that references something specific about the company
  - Submit the application through LinkedIn
5. After all 10 are submitted, send me a summary:
  - Company name + job title
  - Match score
  - What you customized for each
  - Application status (submitted / draft)

Pause before submitting each application and show me the customized version first.

## What you need first

- **Claude Pro** (this goes beyond the free tier).
- The **Claude desktop app in Cowork mode**.
- The **Claude in Chrome** extension, with you **already logged into LinkedIn** in that Chrome browser.

### ALWAYS KEEP "PAUSE BEFORE SUBMITTING" ON

Notice the final line: *"Pause before submitting each application and show me the customized version first."* Keep it. Letting an AI agent submit applications under your name, unattended, is a real risk. A wrong customization or a claim you can't back up goes out as **you**. Review every single application before it sends. Treat the agent as a fast assistant that always needs your sign-off.

### A FEW REALITIES TO RESPECT

Applications still go out as you, and you own everything in them. High-volume automation can bump against platform rules, so keep batches modest and human-reviewed. Quality beats quantity: ten well-tailored applications you've checked will out-perform a hundred careless ones. If automation feels like too much, run this same prompt manually. Have Claude do steps 1–4 as *drafts*, then paste and submit each one yourself.

# The 30-Second Cover Letter

## CHAPTER SEVEN · APPLYING AT SCALE · PROMPT 5

Most cover letters are generic filler that gets skipped. This one is targeted, specific, and written in about thirty seconds.

Run this in the same chat as your resume work so Claude already knows your background and the job's requirements. The result references the specific company and role, maps your experience to their problems, and tackles a weakness head-on instead of hiding it.

### PROMPT 5 · THE TARGETED COVER LETTER

Write me a cover letter for this job using my resume and the job description you already have.

Rules:

1. Open with one sentence that shows I understand their biggest current problem (use the job description as the clue)
2. Second paragraph: 2-3 specific examples from my resume that map directly to what they need
3. Third paragraph: Address one obvious gap or weakness head-on, and reframe it
4. Close with one specific reason I want to work at THIS company, not just any company

Tone: Confident, direct, no fluff, no buzzwords.

Length: Under 250 words.

Do NOT sound like AI wrote it.

## The secret is the third paragraph

Most candidates pretend their weaknesses don't exist. Naming the obvious gap (a career change, a missing credential, less experience than the posting asks for) and then reframing it shows self-awareness and confidence. Those are exactly the traits that move you from "maybe" to "yes." The hiring manager already *sees* the gap; addressing it first robs it of its power.

### MAKE IT SOUND LIKE YOU

"Do NOT sound like AI wrote it" helps, but still edit. Read it aloud. Cut any phrase you'd never say. Drop in one specific, true detail no AI could know: a project, a number, a reason you admire the company. That single human fingerprint is what makes it land.

# The LinkedIn Profile Optimizer

## CHAPTER EIGHT · APPLYING AT SCALE · PROMPT 6

Your resume gets you through the front door. Your LinkedIn profile makes recruiters knock on it.

Most profiles are a lazy copy-paste of a resume, which wastes the platform's real power: *inbound* opportunity. Recruiters search LinkedIn by keyword every day. A profile optimized for those searches turns you from someone chasing jobs into someone jobs come looking for.

### PROMPT 6 · THE LINKEDIN OPTIMIZER

Rewrite my LinkedIn profile to attract recruiters for [TARGET ROLE] roles.

#### 1. HEADLINE

- 3 versions, each under 220 characters
- Use keywords recruiters actually search for
- Show outcome and specialty, not just title

#### 2. ABOUT SECTION

- First sentence has to hook. No "I am a passionate..."
- 3 short paragraphs max
- End with a clear call to action (what kinds of roles or conversations I am open to)

#### 3. EXPERIENCE BULLETS

- Same XYZ formula from my resume
- But more conversational than resume bullets
- Add 1 line per role about what I learned, not just what I did

#### 4. SKILLS SECTION

- Top 5 skills to pin based on the roles I am targeting
- In priority order from most searchable to least

#### 5. FEATURED SECTION

- Suggest 2-3 things I could add (articles, projects, presentations, media) that would make a recruiter stop and look closer

## The headline is the highest-leverage field on the platform

Recruiters search by keyword, and your headline is the first thing they see in results. Compare:

**INVISIBLE**

*"Marketing Manager at XYZ Corp"*

**GETS CLICKED**

"B2B SaaS Growth Marketer | Scaled pipeline from \$2M to \$14M | Demand Gen + ABM"

The second is full of the exact terms a recruiter types into the search bar, and it leads with an outcome. Be findable, then be compelling.

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PART FOUR

# Winning the Offer

*The interview, the follow-up, and the negotiation. This is where good candidates separate from great ones, and where most people leave money and momentum on the table.*

# The Interview Prep System

## CHAPTER NINE · WINNING THE OFFER · PROMPT 7

You got the interview. Now turn Claude into a research analyst, a question predictor, and a mock interviewer, all at once.

Walking in prepared is a massive, underused edge. This single prompt researches the company, predicts the questions you'll face, and runs a live mock interview with feedback. Fill in the role, company, and date, and let it work.

### PROMPT 7 · THE INTERVIEW PREP SYSTEM

I have an interview for [ROLE] at [COMPANY] on [DATE]. Help me prep.

#### # COMPANY RESEARCH

Give me a 1-page brief on:

- What they do and how they make money
- Their biggest current challenge or opportunity (from recent news, earnings, or product launches)
- Their main competitors and how they differentiate
- Their culture and values (from their site, Glassdoor, and recent posts)

#### # PREDICTED QUESTIONS

Based on my resume and this job description, predict the top 10 questions they will ask. Mix behavioral, technical, and situational. For each question, give me:

- Why they are likely to ask it
- A strong 60-90 second answer using a specific story from my resume
- The one trap to avoid in my answer

#### # QUESTIONS I SHOULD ASK THEM

Give me 5 questions that show I did research and actually understand their business. Not "What does a typical day look like" generic stuff. Questions that make the interviewer think "This person gets it."

#### # MOCK INTERVIEW

After I review the above, run a 15-minute mock interview. Ask me the top 5 questions one at a time. After each answer, give me feedback on what was strong and what to fix.

## The mock interview is the part that changes outcomes

Reading sample answers feels productive but is passive. The magic is answering out loud (or by typing) one question at a time, then getting immediate feedback. That rehearsal builds fluency, so the real interview feels like the second take, not the first. Run it more than once and ask Claude to get tougher each round.

### VERIFY THE RESEARCH

The company brief is a great head start, but AI can be wrong or out of date. Spend ten minutes confirming the big claims, like recent news, leadership, and product launches, against the company's own site or a quick search before you cite them.

# Follow-Up Emails That Move You Up the Pile

## CHAPTER TEN · WINNING THE OFFER · PROMPT 8

Hiring decisions aren't only about qualifications. They're about who stays top of mind. Most candidates never follow up at all, so a good one makes you stand out by default.

The right note at the right moment can nudge you from "maybe" to "yes." This prompt generates the three follow-ups you need: after applying, right after the interview, and when you've gone quiet with no reply.

### PROMPT 8 · THE FOLLOW-UP SEQUENCE

Write me 3 follow-up emails for my application to [ROLE] at [COMPANY].

1. POST-APPLICATION (3 days after applying)
  - Short, confident, references one specific detail from the job post
  - Restates fit in 1 sentence
  - Under 60 words total
2. POST-INTERVIEW (within 24 hours)
  - Thank them by name for their time
  - Reference one specific moment from the conversation
  - Reinforce the strongest example I gave
  - Under 100 words total
3. THE NUDGE (7 days after interview, no response)
  - Polite, not desperate
  - Add a piece of value (relevant article, industry insight, or quick thought related to something we discussed)
  - Give them an easy out: "If the timeline has shifted, totally understand"
  - Under 80 words total

Tone for all: Confident, not desperate. Specific, not generic. Human, not template-y.

## The principle: add value, don't just "check in"

A "just checking in" note adds nothing and reads as anxious. One that references a specific moment from your conversation, or shares a relevant article tied to something you discussed, signals professionalism and genuine interest. The post-interview thank-you within 24 hours is

non-negotiable. It's the highest-return email in the whole process, and it's where you reinforce your strongest moment from the room.

# The Salary Negotiation Script

## CHAPTER ELEVEN · WINNING THE OFFER · PROMPT 9

You got the offer. Now do the thing most people are too nervous to do, and that can be worth thousands: negotiate.

The instinct is to say "thank you" and accept whatever number appears. That's expensive. Almost every offer has room, and *how* you ask matters more than what you ask for. This prompt builds a complete kit: market analysis, an email script, a phone script for the awkward moments, and a clear walk-away line decided in advance.

### PROMPT 9 · THE NEGOTIATION SCRIPT

I just got an offer for [ROLE] at [COMPANY]. The offer is [BASE + BONUS + EQUITY + BENEFITS]. Help me negotiate.

#### 1. MARKET ANALYSIS

- Pull salary data for this exact role, level, company, and location
- Tell me where this offer falls (below market, at market, above market)
- Give me a specific counter-offer number with reasoning

#### 2. EMAIL SCRIPT

- Write the exact email I should send to counter
- Express genuine excitement about the role
- Reference market data without being adversarial
- Ask for a specific number, not a range

#### 3. PHONE CALL SCRIPT

- If they want to discuss by phone, give me the exact words to say for:
  - Opening the conversation
  - Stating my counter
  - Handling "this is the best we can do"
  - Negotiating non-salary items if base is firm (signing bonus, extra PTO, remote flexibility, start date)

#### 4. WALK-AWAY ANALYSIS

- At what number should I accept?
- At what number should I walk away?
- What are the non-monetary factors that could make a lower offer worth taking?

## The one rule of negotiation: never give a number first

If they ask "What are your salary expectations?" before making an offer, deflect:

*"I'd like to learn more about the full compensation package before discussing numbers.  
What's the budgeted range for this role?"*

Whoever names a number first anchors the conversation, so you want that anchor to be theirs, or a researched counter, not a nervous guess. Ask for a specific number rather than a range (people negotiate to the bottom of any range you give). And remember base salary isn't the only lever: signing bonus, equity, PTO, remote flexibility, and start date are all negotiable when base is firm.

#### **VERIFY THE MARKET DATA**

Claude's salary figures are a starting estimate. Cross-check against current sources for your role, level, and city before citing a number. Accurate, recent data is what makes a counter feel reasonable instead of presumptuous.

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PART FIVE

# Putting It All Together

*Nine prompts, one clean sequence, from a silent inbox to a signed offer.*

# The Complete Start-to-Offer Workflow

## CHAPTER TWELVE · THE SYSTEM, END TO END

Here is the entire system in order. Run it top to bottom for each serious opportunity.

1. **Resume Audit** (Prompt 1): diagnose your match, missing keywords, and red flags against the specific job.
2. **Experience Rewrite** (Prompt 2): convert duties into XYZ accomplishments, weaving in missing keywords.
3. **ATS + Hiring-Manager Test** (Prompt 3): stress-test from both gatekeepers and produce the final version.
4. **Apply** (Prompt 4): auto-apply with Cowork, or run it manually as drafts you submit.
5. **Cover Letter** (Prompt 5): a targeted, under-250-word letter per role, weakness reframed.
6. **LinkedIn Refresh** (Prompt 6): optimize your profile so recruiters find *you*.
7. **Interview Prep** (Prompt 7): company brief, predicted questions, and a live mock interview.
8. **Follow-Up** (Prompt 8): the three-email sequence, especially the 24-hour thank-you.
9. **Negotiate** (Prompt 9): when the offer lands, counter with data and a clear walk-away line.

### THE MINDSET THAT TIES IT TOGETHER

Always review and personalize what Claude generates. Generic AI content hurts more than it helps. Add your own voice, your own stories, and your own real numbers. **Claude gives you the structure. You provide the substance.** Do that, and you're not competing on who writes the prettiest resume. You're competing on who runs the smartest, most tailored, most persistent process. That can be you, starting today.

Now go get the job. And when you do, pass this book to the next friend who needs it.

# Appendix A · Every Prompt, Copy-Paste Ready

## THE CHEAT SHEET

All nine prompts in one place. Run prompts 1–3 (and 5) in a single chat per job, with your resume and the job description provided up front.

### 1 · RESUME AUDIT

Act as a senior recruiter for this exact company.  
Analyze my resume against this job description.

Give me:

1. A match score out of 100
2. The top 5 missing keywords that the ATS will be scanning for
3. The 3 red flags a hiring manager would spot in under 10 seconds
4. Which sections are strong and why
5. Which sections are weak and why
6. How my resume compares to what a strong candidate for this role would look like

Be brutally honest. I would rather fix problems now than get ghosted later.

### 2 · EXPERIENCE REWRITE

Rewrite my experience section using these rules:

1. Naturally include the missing keywords you identified, but do NOT force them in. They should feel like a normal part of each bullet.
2. Remove or fix every red flag you flagged.
3. Use the Google XYZ formula for every bullet: "Accomplished [X] as measured by [Y] by doing [Z]"
4. Start every bullet with a strong action verb. Never use "Responsible for" or "Helped with".
5. Add specific numbers wherever possible. If I did not provide numbers, suggest realistic placeholders I can fill in later and mark them with [FILL IN].
6. Keep each bullet to 1–2 lines max. Hiring managers skim. Dense paragraphs get skipped.
7. Order bullets by impact, not chronology. The most impressive result goes first.

### 3 · ATS + HIRING-MANAGER TEST

Now act as two different people:

FIRST: Act as an ATS filter. Scan my new resume and tell me:

- Would it pass the ATS for this job? (Yes/No)
- Which keywords are now present and which are still missing?
- Any formatting issues that would confuse an ATS parser? (tables, columns, headers, special characters, images)

SECOND: Act as a hiring manager who is reading 200 resumes in one sitting. Scan my resume and tell me:

- Which sections would you skip? Why?
- What makes you stop scrolling (good or bad)?
- Would you put this in the "yes" pile, "maybe" pile, or "no" pile for this role?
- Rewrite any sections that would get skipped so they actually stop the scroll.

Give me the final version of my resume after all fixes are applied.

### 4 · AUTO-APPLY WITH COWORK

Now that my resume is optimized, go to LinkedIn and do the following:

1. Search for [JOB TITLE] roles in [LOCATION] posted in the last [7/14/30] days.
2. Filter for jobs where my resume is at least a 70% match based on the skills and experience listed in the job description.
3. Pick the top 10 jobs I have the highest chance of landing an interview for.
4. For each job:
  - Read the full job description
  - Customize my resume summary and key bullets to match that specific role
  - Write a short cover note (3 sentences max) that references something specific about the company
  - Submit the application through LinkedIn
5. After all 10 are submitted, send me a summary:
  - Company name + job title
  - Match score
  - What you customized for each
  - Application status (submitted / draft)

Pause before submitting each application and show me the customized version first.

## 5 · TARGETED COVER LETTER

Write me a cover letter for this job using my resume and the job description you already have.

Rules:

1. Open with one sentence that shows I understand their biggest current problem (use the job description as the clue)
2. Second paragraph: 2-3 specific examples from my resume that map directly to what they need
3. Third paragraph: Address one obvious gap or weakness head-on, and reframe it
4. Close with one specific reason I want to work at THIS company, not just any company

Tone: Confident, direct, no fluff, no buzzwords.

Length: Under 250 words.

Do NOT sound like AI wrote it.

## 6 · LINKEDIN OPTIMIZER

Rewrite my LinkedIn profile to attract recruiters for [TARGET ROLE] roles.

### 1. HEADLINE

- 3 versions, each under 220 characters
- Use keywords recruiters actually search for
- Show outcome and specialty, not just title

### 2. ABOUT SECTION

- First sentence has to hook. No "I am a passionate..."
- 3 short paragraphs max
- End with a clear call to action (what kinds of roles or conversations I am open to)

### 3. EXPERIENCE BULLETS

- Same XYZ formula from my resume
- But more conversational than resume bullets
- Add 1 line per role about what I learned, not just what I did

### 4. SKILLS SECTION

- Top 5 skills to pin based on the roles I am targeting
- In priority order from most searchable to least

### 5. FEATURED SECTION

- Suggest 2-3 things I could add (articles, projects, presentations, media) that would make a recruiter stop and look closer

## 7 · INTERVIEW PREP SYSTEM

I have an interview for [ROLE] at [COMPANY] on [DATE]. Help me prep.

### # COMPANY RESEARCH

Give me a 1-page brief on:

- What they do and how they make money
- Their biggest current challenge or opportunity (from recent news, earnings, or product launches)
- Their main competitors and how they differentiate
- Their culture and values (from their site, Glassdoor, and recent posts)

### # PREDICTED QUESTIONS

Based on my resume and this job description, predict the top 10 questions they will ask. Mix behavioral, technical, and situational. For each question, give me:

- Why they are likely to ask it
- A strong 60-90 second answer using a specific story from my resume
- The one trap to avoid in my answer

### # QUESTIONS I SHOULD ASK THEM

Give me 5 questions that show I did research and actually understand their business. Not "What does a typical day look like" generic stuff. Questions that make the interviewer think "This person gets it."

### # MOCK INTERVIEW

After I review the above, run a 15-minute mock interview. Ask me the top 5 questions one at a time. After each answer, give me feedback on what was strong and what to fix.

## 8 · FOLLOW-UP SEQUENCE

Write me 3 follow-up emails for my application to [ROLE] at [COMPANY].

### 1. POST-APPLICATION (3 days after applying)

- Short, confident, references one specific detail from the job post
- Restates fit in 1 sentence
- Under 60 words total

### 2. POST-INTERVIEW (within 24 hours)

- Thank them by name for their time
- Reference one specific moment from the conversation
- Reinforce the strongest example I gave
- Under 100 words total

### 3. THE NUDGE (7 days after interview, no response)

- Polite, not desperate
- Add a piece of value (relevant article, industry insight, or quick thought related to something we discussed)
- Give them an easy out: "If the timeline has shifted, totally understand"
- Under 80 words total

Tone for all: Confident, not desperate. Specific, not generic. Human, not template-y.

## 9 · NEGOTIATION SCRIPT

I just got an offer for [ROLE] at [COMPANY]. The offer is [BASE + BONUS + EQUITY + BENEFITS]. Help me negotiate.

### 1. MARKET ANALYSIS

- Pull salary data for this exact role, level, company, and location
- Tell me where this offer falls (below market, at market, above market)
- Give me a specific counter-offer number with reasoning

### 2. EMAIL SCRIPT

- Write the exact email I should send to counter
- Express genuine excitement about the role
- Reference market data without being adversarial
- Ask for a specific number, not a range

### 3. PHONE CALL SCRIPT

- If they want to discuss by phone, give me the exact words to say for:
  - Opening the conversation
  - Stating my counter
  - Handling "this is the best we can do"
  - Negotiating non-salary items if base is firm (signing bonus, extra PTO, remote flexibility, start date)

### 4. WALK-AWAY ANALYSIS

- At what number should I accept?
- At what number should I walk away?
- What are the non-monetary factors that could make a lower offer worth taking?

# Appendix B • Before & After

## REAL BULLET MAKEOVERS

The XYZ formula in action. Each "after" leads with an outcome, includes a number, and starts with a strong verb.

### CUSTOMER SUPPORT

*Before: "Responsible for answering customer support tickets."*

After: "Resolved 50+ daily support tickets at a 96% satisfaction rating by building a reusable response library that cut average handle time 30%."

### SALES

*Before: "Helped with sales and hit my targets."*

After: "Drove \$480K in new revenue (122% of quota) by rebuilding the outbound cadence and prioritizing the top 20% of accounts."

### MARKETING

*Before: "Managed the company's social media accounts."*

After: "Grew organic social following from 4K to 31K in 9 months by launching a weekly short-form video series, generating 1,200 inbound leads."

### OPERATIONS

*Before: "In charge of scheduling and inventory."*

After: "Cut stockouts 45% and saved \$60K annually by redesigning the inventory forecast and automating weekly reorders."

### NEW GRADUATE

*Before: "Did a marketing internship over the summer."*

After: "Increased newsletter open rates from 18% to 29% during a 10-week internship by A/B testing subject lines across 12 sends."

### **USE THESE AS PATTERNS, NOT FACTS**

These numbers are illustrative. Apply the *shape* (outcome + metric + method) to your own true results. If you don't know the exact figure, make an honest, defensible estimate you'd be comfortable explaining.

# Appendix C · Mistakes, Myths & FAQ

READ THIS BEFORE YOU HIT SUBMIT

## The five most common mistakes

1. **Pasting AI output unread.** The fastest way to ship a generic, error-filled, or exaggerated resume. Always review and rewrite in your own voice.
2. **Skipping the audit.** Rewriting before diagnosing is guessing. Run Prompt 1 first, every time.
3. **Using one resume for every job.** The whole advantage is tailoring. Re-run the system per role.
4. **Leaving [FILL IN] markers in.** Submitting literal placeholders is an instant rejection. Fill every one with a real number.
5. **Fancy templates with columns and graphics.** They confuse the ATS. Use a clean single-column layout with standard headings.

## Quick FAQ

### Will employers know I used AI?

If you paste raw output, maybe, because it has a generic "smell." If you use it as a drafting tool and rewrite in your own voice with your real stories and numbers, no. The goal isn't to hide the tool. It's to make the work truly yours.

### Is using AI for my resume "cheating"?

No more than spell-check, a template, or a career coach. You're presenting your real experience more clearly. The line you must never cross is *fabricating* experience you don't have.

### Do I need to pay for Claude?

The free tier handles all the resume, cover-letter, interview, follow-up, and negotiation prompts. Only the hands-free auto-apply in Chapter 6 needs Claude Pro plus Cowork and the Chrome extension.

### What if the match score stays low?

A persistently low score usually means a real gap between your background and that role, which is useful information. Target roles that fit better, or use the cover letter and a skills/projects section to bridge the gap honestly. AI can sharpen your presentation; it can't invent qualifications.

## **How many jobs should I apply to?**

Fewer, better. Ten well-tailored applications beat a hundred generic ones, on response rate *and* on your sanity.

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**Good luck out there. Now go get it.**

**Nathaniel**